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LETTER DATED 24 MAY 1995 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CROATIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 24 May 1995 from the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Croatia, Dr. Mate Granic, addressed to you.

I would kindly request your assistance in circulating the present letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mario NOBILO
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Letter dated 24 May 1995 from the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Croatia addressed to the President of the Security Council

As the members of the Security Council have been informed on several previous occasions (S/1995/356, S/1995/369, S/1995/371, S/1995/393, S/1995/405 and A/50/178), the situation of the Bosnian Croat Catholic population on the territory of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina under the control of Bosnian Serbs - and in particular in and around Banja Luka - has been rapidly deteriorating in recent weeks. Since 1991, the Diocese of Banja Luka has suffered immensely: a total of over 95,000 Catholics have been expelled, over 400 have been murdered in their homes, 4 priests have been killed, 41 churches and 3 monasteries destroyed, and 32 more churches damaged; only about 27,000 Bosnian Croats remain in the region. Yesterday, an attempt by the local Bosnian Serb authorities to expel the entire Croat population of the village of Zalužani - buses and trucks were brought into the village for that purpose - was prevented, but fear among the population is increasing.

In the same region, over 225,000 Bosniaks have been ethnically cleansed by the Bosnian Serbs. To date 82 per cent of the Bosniak and 81 per cent of the Bosnian Croat pre-war population in the Banja Luka region have been ethnically cleansed.

The local Roman Catholic bishop, Msgr. Dr. Franjo Komarica, began a hunger strike on 17 May 1995 in an attempt to draw the attention of the international community to the Bosnian Serb campaign of terror aimed at the expulsion of the remaining Croat and Bosniak population at Banja Luka, as well as the destruction of churches, mosques and other sacred objects.

The situation is also rapidly deteriorating on the occupied territories of the Republic of Croatia, especially in Eastern Slavonia, and in the adjacent areas of the "Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)" in Vojvodina. The Croatian Serb local authorities in Bapska, Tovarnik, Sarengrad and Ilok have expelled over 500 elderly Croats, marching them over the Danube into the "Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)". At present, they are held by the authorities of the "Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)" in inhumane conditions and isolated in the village of Morović near Šid.

The information available to my Government suggests that their houses are being used for housing the Croatian Serb evacuees from the reintegrated part of Croatia in Western Slavonia. The same appears to be the reason for the renewed suffering of the Croat population in the Banja Luka region. There is no justification for the resettlement of the Croatian Serb population from Western Slavonia, since their civil, political and human rights are respected by the Croatian authorities.

The only remaining Roman Catholic priest in Eastern Slavonia, Father Marko Malović, has been placed under house arrest, and his parishioners

were beaten and harassed during a service in his church in Ilok. In Vojvodina, the attacks on Catholic churches and sacred objects are on the increase. Churches in the villages of Hrtkovci and Vašica have been dynamited and burned down, and the church in Srijemska Mitrovica has been damaged by an explosive device. The Croat population is intimidated.

The Security Council should be concerned about the human rights situation in the region, but regretfully, the emphasis is only on the area of Western Slavonia, where human rights and the Geneva Conventions have been thoroughly respected. The Croatian Government hopes that the Council is about to express the same concerns and take appropriate actions in regard to human rights violations against non-Serbs in Banja Luka and Vojvodina, and in other regions where they are violated such as, for instance, Knin, Vukovar, Sarajevo, Sandžak and Kosovo.

My Government requests that the Security Council meet urgently to discuss the sharply deteriorating situation of human rights of non-Serb populations on the occupied territories of the Republic of Croatia, the territory controlled by Bosnian Serbs in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the territory of the "Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)". My Government requests further that the relevant international monitors be sent to the Banja Luka and Vojvodina regions, to assure that no further harm comes to the non-Serbian population, and supports the concerns expressed by the Government of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the letter submitted to you in this regard.

(Signed) Mate GRANIC
Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister for Foreign Affairs